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WORKS OF ART ON PAPER

James A. McNeill Whistler (1834 - 1903): A Biographical Chronology

1834 Born in Lowell, Massachusetts July 11, son of Major George Whistler and Anna McNeill, his second wife.

1843-1849 Lives in Russia, his father commissioned to build a railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow.

1851-1854 Student at West Point, discharged before graduation for deficiency in chemistry.

1854-1855 Receives technical instruction in etching at U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Washington, draws and etches government topographical plans and maps.

1854-1855 Settles in Paris, lives a bohemian student life in the Latin quarter, studies at Académie Gleyre.

1858 Meets Fantin-Latour and Legros. Takes a walking tour in Alsace which results in "Twelve Etchings from Nature" (the French Set), printed by Delâtre and published by Whistler in London and Paris.

1859-1863 Frequent journeys between Paris and London, often staying in London with half-sister Deborah and her husband, Seymour Haden.

1859 Rents rooms at Wapping. Etches Thames views, later to be published in the Thames Set.

1860 Continues to work on Thames scenes. Visits Paris, there etches portraits of writers and sculptors.

1861 Visits Brittany in the summer with Jo Heffernan, his model.

1862 *Rotherhithe* accepted and hung in the Royal Academy, London.

1863 Settles in England, buys a house in Chelsea (near Battersea Bridge). Some of the Thames etchings exhibited at the Royal Academy. Paris Salon rejects his painting, *Symphony in White*, which is then exhibited at the Salon des Refusés. Visits Amsterdam, looks at Rembrandts and hunts for old paper. British Museum buys its first Whistlers, twelve etchings.

1867 Quarrels with Haden and Legros. Meets Frederick Leyland and is commissioned to paint his children.

1870-1873 Paints portraits of Leyland family and does several Nocturnes.

1871 *Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and other subjects* (the Thames Set) published

1874 First catalogue of Whistler's etchings, 85 entries, by Ralph Thomas, 50 copies published. Etchings exhibited at the Liverpool Art Club; Whistler organizes his first one-man show, 13 paintings and 50 etchings, at 78 Pall Mall. Maud Franklin replaces Jo Heffernan as his principal model.

1876 Decorates "Peacock Room" for F.R. Leyland at 49 Princes Gate, has fight with him, loses Leylands as patrons.

1878 Begins experiments with lithography at behest of Thomas Way. Architect E. W. Godwin builds White House on Tite Street for Whistler; they collaborate on decorative scheme. Trial of Whistler's libel suit against Ruskin, Whistler wins case but receives only 1 farthing in damages and no costs.

1879 Whistler declared bankrupt; White House sold. Goes to Venice in fall with commission from Fine Art Society to execute 12 etchings.

1880 Continues to work in Venice. Returns to London in November, First Venice Set exhibited at Fine Art Society in December.

1880-1886 Etches large number of Chelsea subjects, produces many plates on a visit to the Low Countries.

1883 Exhibition of 51 prints at Fine Art Society, includes Venetian etchings and several London subjects.

1885 Gives famous lecture, the "Ten O'Clock", expounding his philosophy of art.

1886 Series of 26 Venetian etchings, the Second Venice Set, published by Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell and exhibited at their gallery. Catalogue of Whistler's etchings published by F. Wedmore (214 plates).

1887 Takes up lithography again, publishing six lithographs as "Art Notes". Visits Belgium, starts work on a

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projected Belgian set, never completed. Etches 12 plates of the naval review at Tilbury for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

1888 Marries Beatrix Godwin, widow of E.W. Godwin. Spends most of the year in France. Etches plates for a new French series, project not completed.

1889 Trip to Holland. Etches 17 plates in and around Dordrecht and Amsterdam, wants to publish them as a set but the Fine Art Society refuses. Receives honors from Amsterdam, Paris and Munich exhibitions.

1892-1895 Lives at 110 Rue de Bac in Paris with wife, most of this period spent on the continent. Concentrates on lithography.

1895 Summer months at Lyme Regis for his wife's health, lithographs of forges and smiths. In December, 70 lithographs exhibited at the Fine Art Society, mostly work of the years 1892-1895.

1896 Death of his Beatrix, his wife.

1897-1903 Very few additional prints. Lives in London and Paris. In 1900 health begins to fail, travels abroad in Italy, Algiers, and Gibraltar.

1903 Dies in London on July 17.